

MAINE HEALTH ALERT NETWORK



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*****ADVISORY – Important Information*****

2009PHADV055

TO: School-Based Health Centers, School Nurses, Health care providers, Labs, PH-Required, PHN, EMS, Northern N.E. England Poison Control Center, Fire Departments, RRCs, State & Federal Agencies, MEMA Duty Officers, County EMA Directors

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: **Widespread Influenza Activity in Maine**

DATE: October 23, 2009

TIME: 4:15 pm

PAGES: 2

PRIORITY: High

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)

Widespread Influenza Activity in Maine -- October 22, 2009

Summary: Influenza activity in Maine has increased during the past week. Additionally, this week laboratory confirmed seasonal influenza H3 and influenza B were reported, indicating seasonal variants of influenza are also present in Maine. The purpose of this health advisory is to request that health care partners report cases of laboratory-confirmed 2009 H1N1 influenza and any cases of influenza (seasonal or 2009 H1N1) among patients who are hospitalized, have died, and/or are associated with an outbreak.

Background: The 2009 H1N1 influenza was first detected in Maine during April 2009. Since that time, 2009 H1N1 influenza has been the predominant influenza virus found in Maine, as evidenced by laboratory surveillance performed at the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). During October 15 -- October 20, 2009, influenza A/H3 and influenza B were confirmed in otherwise healthy individuals. Widespread influenza activity was reported to federal partners due to an increase in laboratory-confirmed influenza in more areas of the State.

Maine CDC received notification from Affiliated Laboratories Incorporated (ALI), associated with Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, and NorDx Laboratories, associated with MaineHealth systems, that both laboratories have the capacity to confirm 2009 H1N1 and seasonal influenza by real-time reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR). With these additional laboratories, three laboratories in Maine have the capacity to confirm 2009 H1N1 influenza. National reference laboratories may also provide confirmatory laboratory services.

Recommendations: Maine CDC recommends that health care providers consider influenza testing only for patients with influenza-like illness (defined as fever 100° or greater with cough or sore throat, in the absence of another known cause) who are hospitalized, who have died, or for whom a diagnosis of influenza would affect clinical care, infection control, or management of contacts. HETL test requisition and influenza submission forms are available at http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/etl/micro/download_forms.htm and are required for testing. If specimen volumes increase, testing may be prioritized for patients who are hospitalized, have died, and/or are associated with an outbreak.

Maine CDC requests the report of all laboratory-confirmed 2009 H1N1 influenza as required under the Rules for the Control of Notifiable Conditions (*10-144 CMR Ch. 258*). Maine CDC also requests the report of any laboratory confirmed influenza (seasonal or 2009 H1N1) among persons hospitalized, have died, and/or are associated with an outbreak. Health care providers, medical laboratories, health care facilities, day care facilities, correctional facilities, and educational institutions are required to report notifiable conditions. Reports can be received by Maine CDC by fax (207-287-8186) or phone (1-800-821-5821) and should include all information on the notifiable conditions reporting form available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/disease-reporting/index.shtml>.

As influenza continues to spread across the state, surveillance is needed to monitor the magnitude and severity of the pandemic. Partners are encouraged to promote influenza prevention, including hand and respiratory hygiene and influenza vaccination, and early intervention for disease control.